TELLS THE FACTS AND NAMES THE NAMES

CounterPunch

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Food Sovereignty

The Real and the Phony in Organic Food

By R.G. Davis

In this piece I repeat the phrase "food sovereignty" a few times to see if it can replace "food security," "food choice," "slow food," "gourmet food," and "sustainable agriculture."

Food sovereignty is used by the international peasant organization La Via Campesina to define its objectives. One has to read the book by Annette Desmarais, *La Via Campesina*, Pluto, 2007, or the on-line articles on *Food Sovereignty* by Peter Rosset, former director of Food First, to get a full explanation: "Food sovereignty starts with the concept of economic and social human rights, which include the right to food, but it goes further, arguing that there is a corollary right to land and a 'right to produce' for rural peoples."

When you walk into the UC Moffitt undergrad library in Berkeley there is a smiling face and large display of the newest book by Michael Pollan. He is the Chair of the Journalism Department. When I first heard and saw him it was years ago at a Journalism School presentation. He introduced a newfound friend, the farmer Joel Salatin. Pollan introduced Salatin as the "last radical organic farmer" in the U.S. The exaggeration was something like that – the "last" or the "only" or the "unique." This was the startling opener that filled the room, mostly of Slow Food, gourmet friends of chic restaurants and liberals.

When Salatin finished his one-man show of his exploits and unique organic chicken and farming practice I asked him if he had heard about Rudolph Steiner? "Yes." Monatouba Fukouka? "Yes." Allan Chadwick? "Yes." John Jevans? "Yes," Bill Mollison? "Yes." He said: "I learned something from everyone of them." I responded: "So why didn't you mention

DAVIS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Defending the 700,000 Most Despised People in America

The Mothers' Rebellion

By JoAnn Wypijewski

Early this summer an organization representing the most despised people in America, and calling itself RSOL, for Reform Sex Offender Laws, met in Washington D.C. People from across the country talked strategy, lobbied Congress and simply stepped from the heavy shadow of fear and shame.

From the looks on their faces, it seems never to have occurred to Congressional aides that the 700,000-plus people on America's sex offender registries might have loved ones, or might themselves finally have grown sick of keeping quiet. The aides surely were just as clueless, as I had been, that in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico some of these people have been stopping ever more punitive legislation or revising existing law in the direction of sanity, and that the wives and, mostly, mothers of people on the registry had discovered the radical essence of simply speaking up. I talked to three women. Only one, Mary Duval, who started a group called SOSEN in Oklahoma and co-hosts a weekly radio talk show, wanted to be identified by her full name.

Sarah: Don't get me wrong: my son made a mistake. As soon as he saw "14 years old" on that Internet chat, he should have said, click, goodbye. But I want this to be recognized as a total entrapment, by a crooked system. And if I have to walk from Mansfield, Ohio, to Washington, DC, to bring attention to what's going on in this country, that's what I'm going to do.

I threatened to walk naked, but nobody wants to look at me naked.

JW: That might make you a registered sex offender. But let's go back a little bit. You are originally from Lebanon?

S: My mother was born here, in Chinson, West Virginia. Her father had come from Lebanon. He worked and accumulated money, took the family back to Lebanon and bought lots of land. My mother married my dad there, and later on she faced a lot of hard times, so when she was 38 years old she left seven kids behind and came back to the United States, the land of freedom and second chances. Uneducated, she worked and brought all her kids here, originally to Wheeling.

My older sister, who was like a second mom, eventually moved to Mansfield, Ohio. Her husband worked at GM, in a new plant there. By that time Wheeling was on the downhill slide, so we just followed her one after the other, and I am still in Mansfield.

JW: Is the GM plant still there?

S: It went out of business last year. So Mansfield right now is on the decline. You can't hardly get a job. You can't sell a house. You can't do anything, so it's very much a different scenario.

I worked at Frigidaire for twenty-nine years, until they moved to Mexico eleven years ago. At one time we had like 2,500 people there. But, you know, if you are a survivor you just say, "There's an opportunity somewhere else." I didn't even apply for unemployment. I got a job in the hospital working in the outreach lab, where we do in-home draws on patients who need blood work.

JW: How many people had worked at GM?

S: About 1,800. We have so many factories closed, it's like rat haven. That's

WYPIJEWSKI CONT. ON PAGE 4 COL 3

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DAVIS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

them?"

Pollan presented the unique individual as if all the other organic farmers that I knew were dead. In 2004 I had finished an MA thesis having interviewed 35 farmers and people associated with organic farming in the Bay Area, way down to Watsonville and Corralitos and up to areas north of San Francisco. There were many more organic farmers who did as much and more than Salatin, who were less peculiar or photogenic. The inventive Warren Weber in Bolinas, Phil Foster in San Juan Bautista and, most influential, Amigo Bob Cantisano; farmer, organic consultant, and moderator at the annual Eco Farm Conference at Asilomar: a 1200 plus event with at least three hundred farmers besides the retailers, opportunists and apprentices.

When liberals address a movement they tend to do a few things that apply to both political and cultural affairs. In the Slow Food movement, journalists, restaurateurs, and P.R. persons approach ing a fashionable topic that is genuinely socially important – concerning health, diabetes, cancer, food, medical care, mortgages, banks, etc. – first address the subject with an inflated title "Omnivores Dilemma" or "Too Big to Fail" and then direct attention to a trivial issue wherein individuals can avoid being suckered by commercial advertising. Liberals divest the socially important subject of its connections and focus on the narrowest and eventually irrelevant details, winding up with a trope of warm air: the ever-present Vote!

Eric Schlosser for example, details the monstrosity of the meat and food processing industry, but ends up with Vote! It's the same with Christopher Cook's *Diet for a Dead Planet*, 2004: Vote! Consumerism equals Vote! Then there is the extraction process for example: the Slow Food movement in Italy begun by Carlo Petrini – who came out of ARCI the cultural arm of the Italian Communist Party -- is represented in the US by four chic restaurants.

There are nevertheless a few radicals in Europe like Jose Bove and Confederation Paysanne who have entered the political sphere to protect small farmers, organic food production and oppose junk food distributors.

Current food fashion arguments are an easy read: You as an individual can avoid poisoning the planet and yourself by eating locally. Most egregious is the notion that consumerism can change the world.

Meanwhile, in the U.S. the emphasis for some is on 'choice' that ignores the maintenance of the mass junk food system, where everyone who is not an individual has to eat there. Outside the areas of choice, alternatives to fast junk food are rare and difficult to find. Choice is like a shopping guide, protecting oneself, not necessarily one's family, certainly not society, the water, air, soil or the ecology.

Current food fashion arguments are an easy read: You as an individual can avoid poisoning the planet and yourself by eating locally. Most egregious is the notion that consumerism can change the world. "Change the world with what you eat," "Vote with your dollars." Such nostrums appear in DVDs like *Food 2000* or Rob Kenner's *Food Inc.* 2009, Kevin Danaher and The Green Festival, The Bioneers, as well as the books of Schlosser, Pollan, and Cook.

When I read through tracts on the disaster of industrial processing and the consumption of junk food I wonder why they don't state eat organic, buy it, grow it, support it, cook it yourself, pay for it, ask for it, search it out, learn about it, study it, go to classes and help others learn about it, find organic CSA's, and farmers markets (not all are organic) snap up those little paper instructions at the Ecology Center, read them, become a master gardener, a producer, and then see if there is a non-liberal group and invite others to grow and cook/eat organic food. Plus join an international organization: La Via Campesina also supported by Jose Bove and the French Confederation Paysanne (see *Food for Thought*).

Food Sovereignty chops the whole matter of choice into quarters. (1) Peasants should own their land and become producers, not farm workers, (not farm worker unions either); (2) peasants organized to grow *organic* food ('sustainable' is a flatulent obfuscating phrase like 'choice') must also (3) control the market distribution system, by taking agriculture out of WTO, and necessarily (4) stop the dumping of cheap GMO foods by US and Brazilian agribusiness. La Via Campesina has international relations with hundreds of similar organizations in South America Asia, Europe, Africa and a few in North America. This replaces individualistic liberal consumerism with peasant producers, thereby turning the recent food manipulation by international corporations, and their liberal cohorts towards a structural change called food sovereignty.

Walden Bello introduces Desmarais' La Via Campesina: "La Via Campesina not only fights for farmers rights and for land reform, it is also fighting for a way of life that has proved its worth for eons. It is fighting for a relationship between people and their environment that was snapped by short sighted 'industry first' strategies, whether these came in socialist guise or in that of neoliberal capitalism."

So food sovereignty also addresses the international culture of capitalism, while the liberals talk about choice (oh, and vote!) CP

R.G.Davis received a PhD, from UC Davis, 2009, with a dissertation on "Ecological Aesthetics." He can be

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EDITORS
ALEXANDER COCKBURN
JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

ASSISTANT EDITOR
ALEVTINA REA

BUSINESS
BECKY GRANT
DEVA WHEELER

DESIGN
TIFFANY WARDLE

COUNSELOR
BEN SONNENBERG
1937-2010

CounterPunch
P.O. Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558
1-800-840-3683
counterpunch@counterpunch.org
www.counterpunch.org
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Kashmir and the Politics of the Shivalingam

By Peter Lee

Kashmir is one of the most beautiful places on earth. For the last quarter century, it has also been one of the most miserable.

As the Indian government has struggled to deal with powerful separatist forces in the majority Muslim region, Kashmir has experienced a level of violence on par with East Timor, the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, and Chechnya, while far exceeding the well-publicized excesses of China in Tibet and Israel against the West Bank and Gaza during the same period.

80,000 people have perished, including perhaps 8,000 people disappeared by security forces in a dirty war that grew out of the serial rigging of local elections by New Delhi, local outrage, and an influx of battle-hardened mujihadeen during the 1990s. A program of targeted killings by Muslim extremists also led to the de facto ethnic cleansing of the Kashmir Valley, with 100,000 Hindu Pandits fleeing to the neighboring region of Jammu (which, together with Kashmir and the wastes of Ladahk on the Chinese border, forms the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir or JK).

The Indian government operated notorious torture facilities, such as Papa 1 and 2 in Kashmir's summer capital of Srinigar, where detainees endured electric shocks applied through the insertion of copper wires into their penises, resulting in permanent impotence for many and renal failure and death for dozens.

Indian government brutality in Kashmir has been viewed through the lens of great power rivalry in South Asia and the split of the Kashmir region into India and Pakistan-controlled halves, with Pakistan accused of fomenting trouble across the Line of Control to tie up Indian troops.

However, under U.S. pressure, Pakistan has curtailed support for Lashkar e Taeba (LeT--the Kashmiri militant group accused of carrying out the bloody suicide assault on Mumbai), and the focus is shifting to the desperate contradictions between the Indian government, the Kashmiri Muslims, and the Jammu Hindus.

India has resisted the apparent solution—ceding all of Kashmir to Pakistan while holding on to Jammu—evidently out of an unwillingness to hand Pakistan a geopolitical triumph.

In 2008, India breathed a sigh of relief when Kashmiri voters ignored separatist leaders' call for a boycott and turned out in large numbers to vote in the provincial elections. However, it has transpired that many Muslim residents of Kashmir had not abandoned their dreams of de facto independence from India; they had merely transferred their aspirations from the bloody tactics of the militants to the venue of the provincial government.

Climatic conditions caused a failure of the Shivalingam. Instead of appearing at the beginning of summer and then waning picturesquely during the yatra period, the Shivalingam did not form at all.

The state government has found it extremely difficult to accommodate the demand of Kashmiri Muslims for political progress. Although India has abandoned its disastrous policy of direct presidential rule of Jammu and Kashmir, the locally-elected state government is, in matters of security, merely a facade.

India keeps an enormous military force in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, perhaps as many as 700,000. Some troops are there to assert an Indian presence against perceived threats emanating from Pakistan and China, but many of them are there to overawe the local population–a mere 10,000,000 people. For illustrative purposes, this ratio of locals to troops of 14:1 far exceeds the standard occupation doctrine of 50:1, let alone the 80:1 ratio Donald Rumsfeld attempted to impose on Iraq.

Local security is in the hands of the central government's detested Central Reserve Police Force, which in Jammu and Kashmir acts under the equally detested Armed Forces Special Powers Act. AFSPA permits the use of deadly force against assemblies of five or more persons and detention and search without warrant, while granting military personnel immunity from prosecution.

The state's deep and dangerous contradictions are revealed in its signature domestic issue: the controversy over the yatra or pilgrimage to the Shivalingam at the Amarnath cave in the mountains of northern Kashmir.

In the Hindu religion, the Shivalingam or Lingam of Shiva is the symbol of Shiva's creative and destructive power. Since it is usually presented as a cylinder with a rounded top, Western observers have, to the indignation of many Hindus, characterized it as a phallic symbol.

The Amarnath Shivalingam is a large ice spike displaying the lingam shape, formed by water dripping on the floor of the immense Amarnath cave in the remote high mountains of Kashmir. It was discovered by a Muslim shepherd, Butta Malik, in 1850. The Maharajah of Kashmir was delighted with the find--which waxed and waned, ostensibly in phase with the moon--and rewarded the Malik family with a large grant of land and partial responsibility for the shrine.

For much of the 20th century, the Amarnath Shivalingam was little more than a religious curiosity. That changed in 2000, when the New Delhi-appointed governor of Jammu & Kashmir, security hardliner S.K. Sinha, established the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SSAB) with himself as chairman. Sinha aggressively promoted the shrine as an object of Hindu pilgrimage and expanded the yatra or pilgrimage period from one month to two. Instead of a few thousand pilgrims, as many as four hundred thousand Hindu pilgrims, mostly from other northern states of India, registered to make the arduous, high-altitude trek to the Amarnath cave.

His efforts were eyed suspiciously by Kashmiri Muslims as part of an effort to deny the essentially Muslim identity of Kashmir. The systematic efforts of Hindu chauvinists to erode Kashmir's special status inside India have a history extending back to the 1950s. The fact that the Malik family had been excluded from the shrine board--which was now exclusively Hindu--didn't help. Neither did the

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board's rather farcical attempts to sustain the cave as an object of worship.

In 2006, disaster struck. Climatic conditions caused a failure of the Shivalingam. Instead of appearing at the beginning of summer and then waning picturesquely during the yatra period, the Shivalingam did not form at all. The shrine board attempted to foist off a crude and clearly-handcrafted snowman as the Shivalingam in order to avoid disappointing the faithful. Public outcry and the resignation of an offended board member compelled a different tack. Sinha vowed to "harness science to preserve the lingam." It was announced that a cooling system would be installed in the cave to ensure the annual appearance of the Shivalingam.

It is unclear if the system was actually installed--the difficulties of supplying power, whether diesel or hydroelectric, in the remote location were not trivial--but in any case it appeared obvious that there was an interest in maintaining the Amarnath Shivalingam as an significant focus of sustained Hindu observance inside Kashmir, climactic difficulties notwithstanding.

Matters really came to a head in 2008, after Sinha was gone and the JK government approved a long-standing request to transfer roughly 100 acres to the the shrine board for erection of prefabricated accommodations for pilgrims along the trek route.

Alienation of land is a hot-button political issue inside Kashmir. Section 370 of the Indian constitution--a section that Indian ultranationalists would dearly like to see abolished--prohibits land ownership by non-Kashmiris. Efforts to tamper with this restriction are seen as a threat to Kashmiri identity and the decision to alienate even a small and remote parcel of land to a Hindu-controlled shrine board incensed Kashmiri Muslim opinion.

500,000 people appeared in the streets of Kashmir's summer capital, Srinigar, to protest the decision.The entire population of Srinigar is less than one million. Faced with this outpouring of opposition, the government backed down and rescinded the grant.

However, the government's problems were just beginning.

Activists in Hindu-dominated of Jammu organized their own political movement, the Shri Amarnath Sangharsh Samiti (SASS), to insist that the sensitivities of the state's Hindu residents be adequately respected. Representatives of India's ultranationalist Hindu-chauvinist RSS movement and its political wing, the BJP party, were conspicuous within SSAS, but it reflected widespread Hindu anxieties (and the anger of the displaced Hindu pandits) to the extent that the SSAS was recognized by the government as a legitimate negotiating partner on the issue of the Amarnath shrine.

In an atmosphere of curfew and killings (approximately 60 Kashmiris died in multiple incidents) the SSAS derived energy from its own martyrs: three Hindus who committed suicide as an expression of their outrage. The SSAS allegedly organized an economic embargo of Kashmir, blocking the main road from India to Srinigar (which runs through Jammu), causing shortages of medicines and foodstuffs in Kashmir while forcing Kashmir's famous apples (which could not be shipped to market) to rot in the trucks.

The government capitulated again, giving the shrine board the use of the land but not transferring the title.That final episode of flip-flopping marked the end of the JK government, which collapsed and was replaced by the current regime after local elections in 2008. Significantly, the BJP's share of seats rocketed from one to eleven members of the 87-member assembly thanks to its championing of the interests of Hindu voters in Jammu.

Inevitably, as Kashmiri Muslims, Jammu Hindus, and the Indian government braced themselves for further clashes this summer, the issue of the Amarnath yatra re-emerged and with it the threat that communal strife inside Jammu and Kashmir would become permanent and institutionalized. The separatists united under the banner of the All Parties Hurriyet Conference announced their intention to build on outrage over the slaying of three protesters to achieve turnout similar to that of the Amarnath agitation of 2008 and issued their schedule for protests.

Elder statesman of the hardline secessionist movement, Syed Ali Geelani, thereupon rallied his base by raising the Amarnath issue, demanding that the duration of the summer yatra be shortened from the current two months (July 1 to August 24) to the traditional 15 days. The leader of the SSAB, for his part, threatened a repeat of the alleged 40-day economic blockade of 2008, stating if Kashmir protests on the duration of yatra, "It will be reciprocated in Jammu with equal intensity the way we did it in 2008".

To demonstrate his centrist credentials, the Muslim (but Congress Party backed) Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, dispatched government ministers away from Srinigar in the midst of the festering crisis to oversee the yatra. By end-July the toll in Kashmir was 19 protesters dead in a toxic environment of strikes, curfews, stone-throwing, further arrests of local leaders (including the detention of the president and general secretary of the Kashmir Bar Association), and shows of force by the Indian army. During the same period, over 300,000 had trekked to Amarnath to honor the Sivalingam.

These twin phenomena indicate the deep alienation of the Kashmir population from overbearing Indian rule—and the central government's determination to assert that the valley is not defiant Muslim enclave, and is a viable and inseparable part of a multi-ethnic India. **CP**

Peter Lee is a business man who has spent thirty years observing, analyzing, and writing on Asian affairs. Lee can be reached at peterrlee-2000@yahoo.com

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WYPIJEWSKI CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

what we call it because that's who inhabits the buildings. The steel mill is still there, but, again, it went from almost 3,000 employees to maybe 350.

My in-laws, they came here from Yugoslavia after the war. He opened an industrial fabricating business. At one time he had 120 employees, they were working 24/7; now it's hard to even bid jobs. How he stays in business, because he's a union shop and they pay high wages, I will never know. They're using their personal money to keep their doors open. Really, almost all we have right now in Mansfield is a lot of law enforcement. So this is the sign of the time.

JW: Now tell me about your son.

S: I met my husband, a very nice family. He worked for his dad; he did industrial roofing. We got married. We built a house. We had a really good life, and then

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he got sick and passed away. But before that, we adopted my son from Lebanon.

I brought him home December 19, 1982. He was our early Christmas present. His dad died when he was 2 and a half; from then on it was just J. and myself, so I prioritized him in my life. He's a good kid, graduated high school on the National Honor Society. J. went to a college in Northern California, in Humboldt County, and, oh, it's beautiful! The mountains are here, the ocean is here. He started a Greco-Roman wrestling club there, and then he decides that he wants to go to the Olympics as a Greco-Roman wrestler! I said, "J., people who go to the Olympics start when they're little kids." He started in high school. But he was relentless, and when he graduated college, in 2005, the coach of the US wrestling team in Colorado Springs said, "I'm going to give you a chance." So in January 2006 he was training at the Olympic Center, working, pursuing a graduate degree in kinesthiology at University of Colorado, and he was there three months when this happened.

JW: What's "this"?

S: He was living with other Olympians, and they were never around. He was lonely. It was a Saturday night and he was on the Internet looking for a girl. Unlike what you see on TV, he was on adult Yahoo chat. He said, I'm new in town, I would like a friend to do things with. That's when cops come in on your conversation.

This cop starts alluding to sexual things, and then "she" says, "I'm 14." This is a 46-year-old cop. His job is to sit behind a computer and do this work on the Internet. Now, what's a 46-year-old cop doing pretending to be a 14-year-old girl? He and his wife; these are their full-time jobs. The country is broke, but the federal government funds these people to do this.

JW: Have you seen the transcripts?

S: No. I just requested his whole file, because I want to put it out there. But I know the "girl" asked my son to send a picture of himself. He sent a picture of his wrestling team, five guys, and really goofy-looking guys; you know, wrestlers are the goofiest-looking people you could meet. She typed back, "Is this the best that you can do?" He said, "What do you mean?" Naïve. Very naïve. She asked him if he has a condom. "Yes, I have a condom, but I'm not interested in sex. You're too young for that stuff."

The conversation went on, and she asked him to come over. "I'm really tired, it's 10 o'clock," he said. "You know, I'm trying to meet friends in Colorado; I'll come over tomorrow." She said, "My mother will be here." He said, "So what? I'll meet your mother. I'm just trying to make friends."

"No, I want to meet you tonight." Well, he made a huge mistake; he did go over. But first he asked her to send him a picture. She sends a picture of a 25-year-old Hispanic girl. He said, "You sure look old for 14." He gets to the decoy house and sits outside thinking about it. And the decoy, who is not a child, she comes to the door and says, "Come on in." He says, "You come out. I don't trust too many people." Finally, after coaxing, he goes in, and there's a SWAT team there. So he goes to jail; 3 o'clock in the morning they start interrogating him. Well, the guy who interrogates J. tells him, "Of all the nineteen kids we got here tonight, you're the only one I believe, because I read your [Internet] transcript."

Unlike what you see on TV, he was on adult Yahoo chat. He said, I'm new in town, I would like a friend to do things with. That's when cops come in on your conversation.

Well, my son starts talking, which he shouldn't talk, period. He had no experience, didn't know the law, knows absolutely nothing. That was Saturday night. I get a call on Sunday; he's in jail. And my life ended right there.

JW: Do you remember the date?

S: March 26, 2006. He called me on Sunday, the 27. I had to arrange a bond of $15,000. They charged him with enticement. Who was enticing who? They charge him with a felony five, attempted sexual assault on a child. What child? And one other charge, I don't remember. Well, anyways, I cashed my IRAs in and hired an attorney. He didn't do, excuse me, shit. I think J. said three bad words on the chat; he's so embarrassed he wouldn't tell me, but the attorney told me. He said J. kept saying, "What's a young girl like you doing on the Internet? Are you sure your parents don't mind you doing this?" The DA accused my son of being nice to get into her pants.

Fox News Channel 9 ran a series about the sting for a whole week, "Predators at Your Door." Before these kids even had their day in court! In the newspaper the sheriff and the DA were saying, Look at these kids: none of them have any prior offenses. None of them look like sex offenders. They mentioned my son, a kid from the Olympic Center. The sheriff, his exact words were, "They're all 100 per cent convictable."

Finally, J. took the plea. The judge gave him two years' probation with six months' work release and lifetime registration. We're luckier than most mothers, believe me. I talked to a judge in Ohio, a very nice man, and he arranged for J. to do his probation in Ohio, because in Colorado, you not only have to pay $50 a month for your probation, you have to pay $500 a month for your treatment.

JW: I didn't know people had to pay money for probation.

S: How is the state going to get money off of you? Why do you think we're increasing criminal prosecutions?

JW: And Ohio is better?

S: Twenty dollars a month for probation. Twenty dollars a week for treatment. In Mansfield, J. was able to work for family, making plastic piping for steel mills for two years. His probation officer was angry with him because he signed up for college classes without approval. In Colorado, before the sentencing we had to get permission so he could take his finals. Sex offenders can't go to college in Colorado. Well, he got a 4.0. Under all this stress, this kid gets a 4.0! Now he's taking earth science courses at Ohio State in Columbus, and doing research on water quality and applying to graduate schools.

JW: So kinesthiology is out of the picture.

S: That's working with people. He was told he could never work with people again, ever.

In Ohio, he has to register once a year. If he travels – right now he's in Utah on a research trip – he has to register with the sheriff's office there, and every state has different rules so you have no idea how many obstacles there are in front of you. In Colorado, it's barbaric.

D: My son is 25, on probation in

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COCKBURN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Denver, and before he goes anywhere, he has to fill out a safety plan, and the probation officer has to approve it. He wants to go to the eye doctor, he has to have a safety plan, explaining what he'll do if a child shows up.

JW: So, say, I will be brought to the appointment by an adult in a car and if a child comes in I'll run down to the parking lot and sit in the car until the kid is gone?

D: That kind of thing.

S: You have no idea how inhumane. Tell her about that test, D.; what's it called – plasmo-something?

JW: Plesmograph?

D: You go into a room with an examiner. They hook your penis up to a monitor. They show you pictures of women in different states of dress, and they monitor the flow of blood in your penis. My son's test came back as "inconclusive." It didn't show that he had any sexual deviance, but it didn't show that he didn't either. So the recommendation was that he go to therapy to learn to manage his sexual deviance, and to learn the patterns of his sexual deviance.

JW: "Learn the patterns"? What does that mean?

D: Well, I'm not really sure because he doesn't have any. In the evaluation it states that he accepted responsibility for what he did. But then it said that he needed to go to classes to learn to accept responsibility and the consequences of what he did.

S: : My son had that test too. We had to pay for that as part of the $1,100 risk assessment to determine how dangerous he is -- on top of the $17,000 for the attorney; $2,500 to the bondsman; travel back and forth to Colorado three times; $3,000 in court costs for the victims. What victim? The state is supposed to be the victim. He passed with flying colors, thank god.

JW: What are some other rules in Colorado?

D: My son was told he was on probation, we got a list of things we had to do for him to comply. We had to take all the alcohol out the house, which is a given. But I was shocked when I was told that I had to take all of the pictures of my great nieces and nephews and anyone under the age of 18 off my walls and out of my house.

He has to call his probation officer every morning. He cannot go anywhere without permission. He works at UPS part-time, so he leaves at 2:30 in the morning. He has to call this recorded line, tell them he's leaving, tell them his destination, how long it's going to take, what time he's going to arrive. When he gets there, he has to call in to say he's arrived. When he leaves at 8:30 in the morning he has to go through the same process. He has to do this process every time he leaves the house.

He had to take random urinalysis and breathalizers, which averaged out to be about four breathalizers and one urinalysis a week. We had to pay for those – the urinalysis is $11, the breathalizers $3 – and the place will only accept money orders or cashiers' checks. And, oh, you can't go into the post office or bank, so you have to have somebody else get them.

My son was told he was on probation, we got a list of things we had to do for him to comply. I was shocked when I was told that I had to take all of the pictures of my great nieces and nephews and anyone under the age of 18 off my walls and out of my house.

Anyone that comes to our house has to sign a disclosure form saying that they know my son is a sex offender and what he did.

JW: So if someone comes to deliver, I don't know, a refrigerator?

D: They have to fill out the form. The neighbor asked if my son would rake his leaves. He had to ask permission from his probation officer. There was a girl walking down the street, and he had to run into the house. When we moved, he would open the door, look outside both ways, hurry to the trunk of the car, looking around, get the stuff and take it back into the house. It takes him about forty-five minutes each time he has to do a urinalysis because he's so tense. Somebody stands there and watches him pee.

You have to take a polygraph exam every six months, I believe. He failed the first one on the alcohol question, so they make him take Antabuse, the medicine that makes you sick if you drink alcohol. He has to go to an office three times a week where they administer the medication, and he has to sit there for twenty minutes to see if he has a reaction.

He goes to individual therapy once a week for $70 each time. He goes to group therapy once a week; that's $50 each time. The polygraph is $240, and you mean to tell me that the polygraph examiner doesn't know that if he fails the test, he's going to have to turn around and pay another $240 to take another polygraph exam within a week or two weeks?

S: It's a racket.

D: And if he fails it, he has to take Consequence Classes for four more weeks, $50 a week.

Now, the other important part of my story is that my son has been on antidepressants since he was about 18. The doctors said he was chemically depressed, and what drug works now may not work next month, or next week. In probation he has to continue to take his medication or he's not in compliance. He made a remark in group therapy once that he was going to stop taking his medication, meaning he was going to get a new one because the old one wasn't working. His probation officer later said to him, "You know, I can get a court order to make you come to my office every morning to take your medication."

Two weeks ago today I took him to a mental health facility, because he was sobbing, "Mom, please take me to the hospital so I don't hurt myself." He was in the hospital, they changed his medication; completely different kid, night and day. But as they were releasing him, he was arrested and put in jail.

JW: Why?

D: Last November he missed two meetings with his individual therapist. Do you know what a hookah pipe is? Well, they're perfectly legal, and for his birthday he got flavored tobacco and movies, and they were on the table when she came through for a home visit. She told him the hookah was a bong. Then she saw the movies and she said, "You know, R rated movies; you're not sup-

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posed to have them. You need to get rid of all of them."

If you're noncompliant with your probation, you can go to jail. He just got out.

JW: And what was his original crime?

D: He was 23. He was on the computer, in an adult chat room on AOL. This person came in; they started a conversation. I have the transcript so I know how it went down. This person said she was 14.

S: Same detective as my son, but a different sting.

D: The conversation turned sexual, and it was very graphic. I'm not whitewashing that; it was wrong. She asked for his phone number multiple times, and he said no. She asked to meet him multiple times, and he said no. And so they got off the computer. He was on a few days later, and a girl that was 21 from Omaha, Nebraska, started asking questions about the Boulder area, da-ta-da-ta-da. She said she was moving out there for a job, she didn't know anybody, she was leaving the next day, didn't know how she was going to get the truck unloaded. My son gave her his phone number, and said "My friends and my brother and I will come and unload your truck for you."

When he gave that phone number, that's how they tracked him down.

JW: For the 14-year-old? Who wasn't any more real than the 21-year-old.

D: Right. They called him, portraying themselves as representatives of AOL, asking him to come to the Jefferson County Police Department to sign a paper, banning him from AOL. He said, "I can't do that, because I don't drive." Earlier he had had a DUI. They said, "Well, where can you meet us?" He said, "The Starbucks at this corner." He rode his bicycle to the Starbucks. They left the bicycle there when they arrested him.

JW: He never saw it coming. Did he go to trial?

D: He took the plea. We hired an attorney for $10,000; he met with us approximately four times: once in his office, and about five minutes each time before we went to court. In September of last year he got three years of probation. About three weeks in, he told his probation officer, "I'm just coming to terms with what I need to do to get through the three years." She said, "Well, you know, if I don't feel that you're fit to go back into society at that time I can extend that." Her words to him the first time he went into her office were "This isn't about your rehabilitation. There is no cure for you. This is about keeping society safe from you."

I asked his individual therapist specifically, "If there is no known cure for sex offenders, why do we have to pay all of this money and go to all of this therapy?" And she said, "We just want him to live as normal and healthy a sex life as possible." I looked at her and said, "What is that? Who determines what a normal, healthy sex life is?"

Mary Duval: Most treatment providers in Texas tell the men and women in treatment that one-night stands are sexually deviant behavior, and I'm like Whoo, that makes most Americans sex offenders, better shut down the bars!

S: My son's probation officer told him he could not have a girl in his car. But the treatment provider was telling these guys

The neighbor asked if my son would rake his leaves. He had to ask permission from his probation officer. There was a girl walking down the street, and he had to run into the house.

in the group, "You need to have a healthy, wholesome relationship."

MD: Most of the men are scared of women at this point.

S: My son won't ask a girl out.

MD: My son Ricky did get married last year – he's 21 now – but it was to a girl he's known since childhood. When he was on the registry he went to the store once and this girl came up to him, "Hey Ricky, I haven't seen you," and he's pfoom, gone, and locked himself inside my truck and refused to come out. Even now he's very wary; every time a cop pulls behind him he panics.

Ricky was 16, had consensual with a 13-year-old, and they made him a predator for life. I changed two laws in Oklahoma: one, to get his expungement; another, to get a Romeo-Juliet exception to the sex offender laws, and so Ricky was off the registry November 2 of last year. But he spent three years on that hell-hole dock, and I'm still one pissed-off mommy. It destroyed his education. It destroyed my marriage. It destroyed my family. The damage they did to my son is unforgivable, and the damage they continue to do to all our sons is unforgivable.

D: I have told many people that my son didn't have a problem when he went into the system, but he sure as hell will have one when he comes out.

JW: Hardly any situation is neutral. Say he was here, packing up, and there was a child walking across the parking lot. He'd have to call his probation officer and say, "I'm in the parking lot of the Quality Inn, 501 New York Street NE, Washington, DC, and a child just walked across and nothing happened"?

D: Mhmm. Because if he doesn't report that and he goes to a polygraph exam and they ask, "Have you been in close proximity to a child?" And he says no and it shows "deceptive" and he comes back and says, "Well, there was this kid in the parking lot but I didn't report it," he's just failed his polygraph.

Now, once he passes his first polygraph he has to take a sexual history polygraph, asking about every sexual encounter that he's had.

JW: How graphic do they get?

MD: Have you had sex with animals?

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Have you had sex with dead bodies? When you have sex, what position are you in? What do you do? They didn't actually say "dead bodies" they used a word—

JW: Necrophilia.

MD: Right. Ricky went up to the examiner and said, "Um, my mom and I don't know what this word is." The examiner said, "Don't you bullshit, me, boy."

JW: So every moment of atoning for your supposed sexual obsession is drenched in sex. Every life experience is turned into a kind of pornography for the treatment provider and the probation officer and the truth examiner.

MD: We mothers are going to change this. Every registered individual is a child of somebody. Somebody loves them. You know we've started Women Against the Registry. I, personally, want the registry abolished.

S: That's where my heart is. I'm very angry with this country. It's like a police state. We're not a herd of animals that you can stamp some of our foreheads with a number so you can track us down.

JW: Did you feel that way before your son got caught up by law enforcement? Because an awful lot of people have been swept up by what you now call the police state for an awfully long time.

S: Oh, no, I was a very happy-go-lucky person. It didn't affect me, so why should I care? Now it's hitting a new group of people. We lost the war on drugs; now we have the war on sex. We always have

Every registered individual is a child of somebody. Somebody loves them. You know we've started Women Against the Registry. I, personally, want the registry abolished.

to have a group of people to condemn and punish and ridicule and isolate; look at our history. But I didn't know that history before this.

MD: This is a system that is exiling a whole generation of our young men. One-third of the registry is youths under the age of 25. So we need more mothers like Sarah and D. and Mary Sue Molnar from Texas Voices and myself to stand up and do some serious ass kicking.

I was just in California, and I'm gonna be very honest, I cried every time I met someone who said, Hi, I'm Mel; I'm a 290. I'm Steve; I'm a 290 – 290 means registered sex offender in California. These are human beings being forced in the streets with *nothing*. I'm a victim of sexual abuse. I believe in treatment. I believe in rehabilitation. I meet moms like D. and Sarah and I say, what the hell is going on here? Four years ago I was dumb as a box of rocks. I thought this registry was the most wonderful thing on the planet. I carry guilt with me every day for what happened to my child, and I carry guilt for being so stupid. So my ultimate goal is to link all the moms and fight the fight. It's not just about the RSO anymore; it's about human and civil rights in the United States of America. **CP**

JoAnn Wypijewski is on the road, filing reports for CounterPunch across America. She can be reached at jwyp@earthlink.net

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